

he is denied admission to certain, if not to many, military societies on the plea that he is not an officer; his claim to campaign medals, an inexpensive recognition of services in the field, has repeatedly been disapproved on the same plea, though a *veterinarian*, whose profession in civil life is not above that of a physician, is granted such medals just as if he were an officer. And yet, it requires only a ruling of the Secretary of War to grant to contract surgeons this small and yet most coveted reward! The pay of a contract surgeon remains the same irrespective of home, foreign or length of service. He is denied commutation of quarters while serving as transport surgeon or when on duty at posts where there are no public quarters available, and must provide for himself as best he can. Through wearing a uniform devoid of insignia of rank, he has been mistaken for a band musician, a commissary sergeant or a steward, and is as likely to be passed unnoticed as to be saluted by enlisted men. This from actual experience at army posts. The tenure of office of contract surgeons is uncertain. Though they sign a contract for a definite period, they may be retained indefinitely in the service, or their contract may be annulled any day, and they may be dismissed without trial and without redress by a chief surgeon of a department or of an army in the field or by the surgeon-general himself. This uncertainty as to their future also serves to dampen the zeal of otherwise capable and ambitious quasi-officers of recognized value.

Lastly, being allowed by existing regulations to wear nothing more handsome than a dark blue dress uniform devoid of shoulder straps and of other insignia of rank, and this attire not being prescribed for occasions of ceremony, contract surgeons must abstain from participating in any military function where officers are in full dress, or else appear in civilian clothes, which is out of place in most instances.

All these unnecessary and petty annoyances serve to render the life of contract surgeons unhappy, and breed discontent to the detriment of the service. The motives which prompt contract surgeons to accept service under such unfavorable conditions need not be dwelt upon at this time. The fact remains that as a corps they are an indispensable part of the medical department, and since they must serve in the capacity of officers with all the responsibilities and none of the privileges thereof, they should be commissioned.

An Army Medical bill which all contract surgeons have looked to as a remedy for existing evils, has repeatedly been sidetracked, though endorsed by the medical fraternity of the entire country and by the president as well. The American Medical Association through its journal recently said in despair that the medical profession at large had vainly endeavored to assist the army doctors, but that the latter appeared to do nothing for themselves, and that the only hope for them was in a concerted action from within. This seems incredible, and yet how seldom have contract surgeons ever raised their voice in their own behalf!

Our only hope is that the coming Congress will not overlook the unfortunate contract surgeons as it has so often done in the past. The Army Medical bill provides for the creation of a Reserve Medical Corps, U. S. Army, in lieu of the distasteful contract service. The passage of this bill would settle the question once for all, provided it be retroactive and take cognizance of service performed since 1898, in determining rank, pay and the right to campaign medals. BUT this excellent bill may never come to a vote, and it is in anticipation of this calamity, that it is deemed pertinent to sum up the wants of contract surgeons as follows:

1. The abolition of the name Contract Surgeon and the substitution therefor that of Acting Assistant Surgeon, the same as in the Navy and the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, or that of Assistant Surgeon Reserve Medical Corps, or that of Additional Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Army.

2. A definite status and the rank, title and pay of an officer, with a presidential commission while serving under any of the designations above given.

3. Recognition of past military service since 1898, either as volunteer or contract surgeon, in determining lineal rank in the new corps, and the right to campaign medals which are now denied contract surgeons who have earned them through participation in the various campaigns which they serve to commemorate.

If some measure is taken by Congress embodying these suggestions for the relief of contract surgeons whose claims are unquestionably well founded and just, the service will be benefited thereby.

A temporary commission for temporary service, but a commission nevertheless. Such is the plea of contract surgeons. May it be heard and heeded! Oct. 5, 1907.

CRIMES? OR MALADIES!*

By ANTRIM EDGAR OSBORNE, M. D., Santa Clara.

It is not necessary to be very observant to notice in visiting public penal and charitable institutions, the strong similarity which exists among their inmates. True, some are being punished for crimes, while others are being cared for because of their mental and physical weakness; and yet in institutions, apparently as wide apart as a reform school and a home for feeble-minded, you will see the same cast of features and very many of the same physical characteristics. On a very slight acquaintance with the inmates, you will observe that many of them owe more to accident, influence, or the views of the committing magistrate for the fact that they are in one institution rather than in the other, than to the peculiar circumstances of their case; and in a somewhat extensive experience I have observed that frequently one judge will send the same class of boys and girls to a reform school, that his brother on the bench will commit to an institution for the care of those afflicted with mental disorders.

There is, of course, nothing new in this view

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of the subject to those who have given any time to the study of penology or insanity; but penology has only commenced to attract the attention of the better educated classes, and a vast majority, even of our intellectual fellow citizens, have very erroneous ideas on insanity and idiocy and their kindred diseases.

Yet it must be very evident that if there is any truth in the statement that there is a more or less close affinity between our criminal classes and those mentally deficient, the education—by which I mean the moral and mental improvement—of the former, is only to be accomplished when we recognize that we are treating a diseased mind, very often when we are endeavoring to reform an immoral boy or girl, or a criminal man or woman.

Evidently, disease and willful criminality are very different; and to punish a human being for acts committed as the result of irresistible diseased impulses, because they are of a criminal nature, is no more logical than it would be to punish an insane man for blasphemy because he imagines himself God or the Savior.

It seems to me, therefore, of the utmost importance to ascertain how much foundation there is for the theory that many criminals are mentally deficient, and irresponsible for their acts; and to make the investigation of this subject one of the principal stones in the arch, if not the keystone, of education and training in our reform schools, and it is to a few facts in this connection that I beg to call your attention.

First, let us look at the physical characteristics; sitting during an entertainment, on a platform where you can see the entire audience, you will notice many bright faces both at the reform schools and the schools for the training of the feeble-minded; but you will also notice many misshapen heads, many faces with stupidity clearly stamped upon them, and in reform schools those are usually the most difficult cases to permanently improve. They are rarely great criminals, it takes intelligence to be a great criminal just as it takes intelligence to succeed in any honest calling. But they are persistent law-breakers, petty thieves, vagabonds, who live, when out of jail, by preying on society and their fellow men.

You will notice that many boys in reform schools have a number of characteristics which mark idiots, imbeciles and the feeble-minded. They are under size, they look much younger than ordinary children of the same age, they develop no hair on their faces until late in life, and they do not progress in school with the same amount of teaching near as rapidly as common school children. Their penmanship is generally bad and erratic, and these traits are peculiarly well developed in the listless, un-reformable classes whose faces most nearly resemble the idiot and the feeble-minded.

Of course, I know I will be told of hundreds of boys who have graduated from reform schools and who have made a success in life; who are tall; have full beards; write a copperplate hand, etc., but I beg that you will kindly remember that I do not

claim that all inmates of reform schools are idiots, or mentally weak, but that there is a certain proportion of them who are, and that those who are, are irresponsible for their acts and do not belong in the reform school because reform school discipline can not possibly reform, but will only accentuate their trouble. I think I am not wrong in stating that all the peculiar characteristics of size, lack of facial hair, erratic penmanship, and so on are characteristic of the feeble-minded and imbecilic.

If from the study of the physical characteristics, we pass to the study of their heredity and family history, the resemblance between many reform school and weak-minded children is even more striking. In both, we have drunken and dissipated parents in many cases. We have, in both, inherited mental weakness and miserable home surroundings. I have found it difficult to get very full statistics of this branch of the subject, and therefore must speak largely from my own observation. In over fifty cases in which I have an intimate personal knowledge, all of whom were inmates of one or the other of the reform schools of the state, sixteen are found to have dissipated fathers; twelve, dissipated mothers; three at least were illegitimate, with five more who knew nothing of their parents and probably should be classed as illegitimate also. Seventeen are known to have dissipated sisters. In several cases brothers and sisters were both in reform schools. One had a father who committed suicide, two had fathers who were hung, and in one case the father was accused of outraging his own daughter and was hung by a mob for the alleged crime; and in one case only could the boy look back to both parents without shame. In all the cases but two, the dissipation, crime, etc., on the part of the parents existed prior to the children's birth. One was in a reform school before he went to the insane asylum. Only two, with a bad mother (they were brothers), and in their case the mother was a drunkard but not immoral, can be said to have done at all well. The others have struggled hard but seem utterly incapable of resisting temptation when it comes with any force.

Another characteristic of theirs is a periodical desire to tramp and wander which no possible inducements of home or home comforts can overcome. After they have "beaten" their way from San Francisco to New York, or from Texas to Maine, they will return and work for a little while, a few months and then go off for another tramp. They are unable to explain why they do this except that it is an irresistible impulse. Notice that these impulses are at first periodical, but finally become continuous. A very large number of these classes have vices to which it is only possible to casually allude. It will be said that they acquired this "tramping" to a certain extent; that is true, and yet I know of a case of a boy only eight years of age who had never been a tramp and who was in an institution surrounded by the best moral influence, and yet had vices that one would scarcely expect to see in a boy of twice his age.

The deadening of the moral senses and the ap-

parent increase in the immoral tendencies and tastes, is, I believe, characteristic in many cases of epileptics, and I have no doubt that many of the boys and girls who are sent to reform schools, are really suffering from epilepsy in more than one of its peculiar phases. The fact that these attacks of a desire to tramp, to move on, are periodical, and not continuous, would go to show, I believe, that they are more or less the result of disease. And the further fact that in some cases at the time of these periodical attacks, there seems to be on the part of the boy, a melancholia or indifference to the future, and carelessness as to what becomes of him, would all point to a trouble of a epileptoid origin.

I know a boy who is one of the best tailors I have ever seen; who works industriously and well, gives no cause of complaint sometimes for as long as two months, when he will suddenly seem to get morose and will declare that he would just as soon be in the penitentiary as out of it, and that he does not care if he is dead, and in fact on one occasion attempted to commit suicide. He always had a desire at such times to tramp and ramble. He has never committed any serious crime, yet he has been in jail numerous times. You may find his picture in nearly every sheriff's office in California, Nevada and, probably, as far east as Ogden. Physicians who have examined him are of the opinion that he is mentally deficient, and at the time of these attacks, irresponsible for his acts; yet at a reform school to which he has been committed several times, he has run away probably two dozen times with the inevitable result of being severely punished on his return. I became thoroughly convinced in this case that the boy was not really responsible for his acts, and had him committed to one of the insane asylums of the state where he has done remarkably well under a treatment similar to that extended to insane patients, though we have been unable to suppress his intense desire from time to time to run away.

The lack of intellectual power is even more clearly visible, to my mind, in the girls whom one finds in reform schools than in the boys. The fact is, that only a very small portion of what are known as dissipated women, have any strong mentality and there is no question but that a large percentage of the fallen women in our community belong in institutions for the care of the feeble-minded. You will find girls in reform schools and insane asylums, and asylums for weak-minded persons who are so identical in all their leading characteristics that it is evident that it was simply a chance or some pull on the part of the relatives and friends that landed the more fortunate among them in an institution for the care of mental diseases rather than in the reformatory. If my views are correct from what I have observed in the various public institutions in this and other states, it stands to reason that, as I have stated above, the most important thing for a magistrate to do when a case of this kind is brought before him, is to determine whether he is asked to punish a criminal responsible for his or her acts, or to consign to a hospital, an unfortunate who is ir-

responsible to a greater or less degree for the sins he or she commits.

The evils that flow from the present indiscriminate system of condemning this class at random to reform schools or insane asylums regardless of their mental condition, are many and obvious. In the first place, reform is absolutely impossible unless the mind and proper mental condition can be restored. Consequently to commit a person of this class to an institution where he will only have to remain for a given time instead of to an institution where he would have to remain until cured, is an injury to posterity, an injury to society, and an injury to the person himself because it makes of him a disgraced member of society, condemns him to the severity of prison life, and the associating with criminals increases the disease and debases his already low character. It is an injury to society because it adds to the already numerous population who prey upon its more industrious and respectable fellow citizens by dishonesty, murder and other crimes.

It is an injury to posterity because it allows these unfortunates to go forth and become the parents of children who are more likely to become worse morally, mentally and physically than they were themselves.

I believe perhaps as good a solution as any of the difficulty that confronts us with regard to the proper handling of these classes of human beings, is to do away with definite sentences, and to commit children to reform schools and adults to penitentiaries until such time as there is a reasonable expectancy of their having been permanently reformed. We need badly, some sort of public institutions half way between the hospitals for the feeble-minded and insane and the prisons. A place where a person of low mentality and evil tendencies can be restrained indefinitely from becoming a prey on society and a propagator of more of his kind.

Certain it is that even kindness has no permanent and serious effect on this class in reform schools, and it is impossible to do anything with them unless we realize the fact that they have no place in reform schools at all but are to be classed with the mentally weak and diseased, and treated as such.

CYSTOSCOPIC APPEARANCE IN SOME CASES OF SEMINAL VESICULITIS.*

Report of Case by R. E. PECK, M. D., San Francisco.

Inflammation of the seminal vesicles is not, as a rule, accompanied by distinct symptoms which would direct the patient's, or our, attention to the vesicles, as is the case in disease of some of the other organs of the body. Without going into the cause, pathology, etc., it is to one of the symptoms of chronic seminal vesiculitis that I wish to call attention to-night.

Some patients state that since an attack of gonorrhea they do not feel exactly right, or have a feeling of sexual weakness, with either a diminished

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